

# COPING WITH STRESS, ANXIETY, AND SUBSTANCE USE DURING COVID-19: HOW ANIMALS CAN HELP

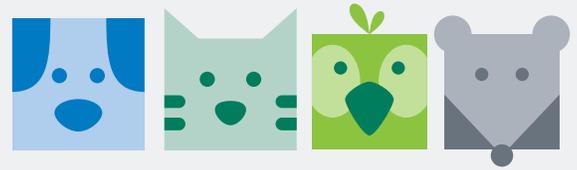
The COVID-19 pandemic has created disruptions in our lives that can cause feelings of stress and anxiety. **These feelings are normal.**

## Stress and anxiety may cause you to experience:

- Fear or constant worry
- Anger or being easily irritated
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating
- Struggling to make decisions
- Consuming more alcohol, cannabis or other substances than usual

## Did you know:

The connection between humans and animals can be important in reducing stress and anxiety.



In the *Life in Recovery from Addiction in Canada* survey led by CCSA, 88% of Canadians identified their relationship with animals or pets as an important support in their recovery from addiction.

## Activities you can do with your pet to cope

Don't have a pet? Connect with therapy dogs online at [therapydogs.ca](http://therapydogs.ca) to PAWS your stress.

-  **Stay active and keep busy.** Watch therapy dog **Mia** and handler **Dan** play hide and seek.
-  **Stay connected** with friends and family. Watch therapy dog **Anna-Belle** and handler **Colleen** connect to learn new dance moves.
-  **Take a break.** See how therapy dog **Zaphod** takes a break to relax.
-  **Put structure in your day.** Watch therapy dog **Almond** go for regular bike rides.
-  **Take care of your body.** Check out what therapy dogs **Blizzard** and **S'more** eat to keep healthy.

## If you use substances

- 1 Monitor your use of substances: pay attention to the frequency and context of your use.
- 2 Follow Canada's **Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines**.
- 3 Follow **Canada's Lower Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines**.
- 4 Avoid stockpiling alcohol, cannabis and other substances.
- 5 Reach out for help if you feel your substance use is becoming a problem.

## REACH OUT FOR HELP

Talk to a family member, friend or seek professional support, if needed. For additional resources and support visit [Wellness Together Canada](http://Wellness Together Canada).

For more information visit, [ccsa.ca/Impacts](http://ccsa.ca/Impacts) or [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca)